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GRADED POETRY READERS

FIFTH YEAR

EDITED BY

KATHERINE D. BLAKE

PRINCIPAL GIRLS' DEPARTMENT PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 6,
NEW YORK CITY

AND

GEORGIA ALEXANDER

SUPERVISING PRINCIPAL, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



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INTRODUCTION

POETRY is the chosen language of childhood and youth. The baby repeats words again and again for the mere joy of their sound : the melody of nursery rhymes gives a delight which is quite independent of the meaning of the words. Not until youth approaches maturity is there an equal pleasure in the rounded periods of elegant prose. It is in childhood therefore that the young mind should be stored with poems whose rhythm will be a present delight and whose beautiful thoughts will not lose their charm in later years.

The selections for the lowest grades are addressed primarily to the feeling for verbal beauty, the recognition of which in the mind of the child is fundamental to the plan of this work. The editors have felt that the inclusion of critical notes in these little books intended for elementary school children would be not only superfluous, but, in the degree in which critical comment drew the child's attention from the text, subversive of the desired result. Nor are there any notes on methods. The best way to teach children to love a poem is to read it inspiringly to them. The French say : "The ear is the pathway to the heart." A poem should be so read that it will sing itself in the hearts of the listening children.

In the brief biographies appended to the later books the human element has been brought out. An effort has been made to call attention to the education of the poet and his equipment for his life work rather than to the literary qualities of his style.

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FIFTH YEAR—FIRST HALF.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564-1616

A Violet Bank

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows :
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk roses and with eglantine.

JOHN KEATS

ENGLAND, 1795-1821

The Dove

I had a dove, and the sweet dove died ; 5
And I have thought it died of grieving ;
O, what could it grieve for ? Its feet were tied
With a single thread of my own hand's weaving.

Sweet little red feet, why should you die?
Why should you leave me, sweet bird, why? 10

You lived alone in the forest tree,
Why, pretty thing, would you not live with me?
I kissed you oft, and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL

SCOTLAND, 1797-1835

Sing on, Blithe Bird!

- 5 I've plucked the berry from the bush, the brown
nut from the tree,
But heart of happy little bird ne'er broken was
by me.
I saw them in their curious nests, close couching,
slyly peer
With their wild eyes, like glittering beads, to
note if harm were near;
I passed them by, and blessed them all; I felt
that it was good
10 To leave unmoved the creatures small whose
home was in the wood.
And here, even now, above my head, a lusty
rogue doth sing,
He pecks his swelling breast and neck, and trims
his little wing.

He will not fly ; he knows full well, while chirp-
ing on that spray,
I would not harm him for a world, or interrupt
his lay.
Sing on, sing on, blithe bird ! and fill my heart
with summer gladness.
It has been aching many a day with measures
full of sadness !

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794-1878

The Gladness of Nature

Is this the time to be cloudy and sad, 5
When our mother Nature laughs around,
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming
ground ?

There are notes of joy from the hangbird and
wren,
And the gossip of swallows through all the 10
sky,
The ground-squirrel gayly chirps by his den,
And the wilding-bee hums merrily by. .

The clouds are at play in the azure space,
And their shadows at play on the bright green
vale,
And here they stretch to the frolic chase,
And there they roll on the easy gale.

5 There's a dance of leaves in that aspen bower,
There's a titter of winds in that beechen tree,
There's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the
flower,
And a laugh from the brook that runs to the
sea.

And look at the broad-faced sun, how he smiles
10 On the dewy earth that smiles in his ray,
On the leaping waters and gay young isles, —
Ay, look, and he'll smile thy gloom away!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

An April Day

When the warm sun, that brings
Seedtime and harvest, has returned again,
15 'Tis sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with bright
forms,
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mold
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives ;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and colored
wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green slope
throws
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland grows.

And when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching far,
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows
throw,
And the fair trees look over, side by side,
And see themselves below.

5. Sweet April! many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.
-

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

The Hemlock Tree

[Translated from the German]

- O hemlock tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful
are thy branches!
10 Green not alone in summer time,
But in the winter's frost and rime!
O hemlock tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful
are thy branches!

DINAH MARIA MULOCH CRAIK

ENGLAND, 1826-1887

Green Things Growing

Oh, the green things growing, the green things
growing,

The faint sweet smell of the green things grow-
ing!

I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things
growing.

Oh, the fluttering and the pattering of those
green things growing!

How they talk each to each, when none of us
are knowing;

In the wonderful white of the weird moon-
light

Or the dim dreamy dawn when the cocks are
crowing.

I love, I love them so, — my green things grow-
ing!

And I think that they love me, without false
showing;

For by many a tender touch, they comfort me
so much,
With the soft mute comfort of green things grow-
ing.

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON

ENGLAND, 1802-1838

The Wind

The wind has a language, I would I could learn ;
Sometimes 'tis soothing, and sometimes 'tis stern ;
5 Sometimes it comes like a low sweet song,
And all things grow calm, as the sound floats
along ;
And the forest is lulled by the dreamy strain ;
And slumber sinks down on the wandering main ;
And its crystal arms are folded in rest,
10 And the tall ship sleeps on its heaving breast.

GEORGE P. MORRIS

AMERICA, 1802-1864

Woodman, Spare that Tree !

Woodman, spare that tree !

Touch not a single bough !

In youth it sheltered me,

And I'll protect it now.

'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy ax shall harm it not!

That old familiar tree, 5
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea —
And would'st thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties; 10
Oh, spare that aged oak
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy 15
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here,
My father pressed my hand —
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand. 20

My heartstrings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.

Old tree! the storm still brave!
And woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy ax shall harm it not.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564-1616

Under the Greenwood Tree

- 5 Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet birds' throat —
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
- 10 Here shall he see
 No enemy
But winter and rough weather.
- 15 Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets —
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
- Here shall he see
 No enemy
- 20 But winter and rough weather.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

The Arrow and the Song

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where ;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air, 5
It fell to earth, I know not where ;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song ?

Long, long afterward, in an oak 10
I found the arrow, still unbroke ;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564-1616

A Sea Dirge

Full fathom five thy father lies :
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes : 15
Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange ;
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark, now I hear them, —
5 Ding, dong, bell.

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL

AMERICA, 1795-1856

The Coral Grove

Deep in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet and goldfish rove ;
Where the sea flower spreads its leaves of blue,
That never are wet with the falling dew ;
10 But in bright and changeful beauty shine
Far down in the green and glassy brine.
The floor is of sand, like the mountain's drift, —
And the pearl shells spangle the flinty snow ;
From coral rocks the sea plants lift
15 Their boughs, where the tides and billows flow.
The water is calm and still below,
For the winds and waves are absent there,
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow
In the motionless fields of upper air.

There, with its waving blade of green,
The sea flag streams through the silent water,
And the crimson leaf of the dulse is seen
To blush like a banner bathed in slaughter;
There, with a light and easy motion, 5
The fan coral sweeps through the clear, deep
sea ;

And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean
Are bending like corn on the upland lea :
And life in rare and beautiful forms
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone, 10
And is safe when the wrathful spirit of storms
Has made the top of the wave his own :
And when the ship from his fury flies,
When the myriad voices of ocean roar,
When the wind god frowns in the murky 15
skies,

And demons are waiting the wreck on shore,
Then, far below, in the peaceful sea,
The purple mullet and goldfish rove
Where the waters murmur tranquilly
Through the bending twigs of the coral grove. 20

PHOEBE CARY

AMERICA, 1824-1871

The Leak in the Dike

- The good dame looked from her cottage
At the close of the pleasant day,
And cheerily called to her little son
Outside the door at play :
- 5 "Come, Peter, come! I want you to go,
While there is light to see,
To the hut of the blind old man who lives
Across the dike, for me ;
And take these cakes I made for him —
- 10 They are hot and smoking yet ;
You have time enough to go and come
B'fore the sun is set."
- Then the good-wife turned to her labor,
Humming a simple song,
- 15 And thought of the husband, working hard
At the sluices all day long ;
And set the turf a-blazing,
And brought the coarse black bread ;
That he might find a fire at night,
- 20 And find the table spread.

And Peter left the brother,
With whom all day he had played,
And the sister who had watched their sports
In the willow's tender shade ;
And told them they'd see him back before 5
They saw a star in sight,
Though he wouldn't be afraid to go
In the very darkest night !
For he was a brave, bright fellow,
With eye and conscience clear ; 10
He could do whatever a boy might do,
And he had not learned to fear.
Why, he wouldn't have robbed a bird's
nest,
Nor brought a stork to harm,
Though never a law in Holland 15
Had stood to stay his arm !

And now, with his face all glowing,
And eyes as bright as the day
With the thoughts of his pleasant errand,
He trudged along the way ; 20
And soon his joyous prattle
Made glad a lonesome place —
Alas ! if only the blind old man
Could have seen that happy face !

Yet he somehow caught the brightness
Which his voice and presence lent ;
And he felt the sunshine come and go
As Peter came and went.

5 And now, as the day was sinking,
And the winds began to rise,
The mother looked from her door again,
Shading her anxious eyes ;
And saw the shadows deepen
10 And birds to their home come back,
But never a sign of Peter
Along the level track.
But she said : " He will come at morning,
So I need not fret or grieve —
15 Though it isn't like my boy at all
To stay without my leave."

But where was the child delaying?
On the homeward way was he,
And across the dike while the sun was up
20 An hour above the sea.
He was stopping now to gather flowers,
Now listening to the sound,
As the angry waters dashed themselves
Against their narrow bound.

"Ah! well for us," said Peter,

"That the gates are good and strong,
And my father tends them carefully,
Or they would not hold you long!

You're a wicked sea," said Peter ;

5

"I know why you fret and chafe;
You would like to spoil our lands and homes;
But our sluices keep you safe!"

But hark! Through the noise of waters

Comes a low, clear, trickling sound ;

10

And the child's face pales with terror,
As his blossoms drop to the ground.

He is up the bank in a moment,

And, stealing through the sand,

He sees a stream not yet so large

15

As his slender, childish hand.

'Tis a leak in the dike! He is but a boy,

Unused to fearful scenes ;

But, young as he is, he has learned to
know

The dreadful thing that means.

20

A leak in the dike! The stoutest heart

Grows faint that cry to hear,

And the bravest man in all the land

Turns white with mortal fear.

For he knows the smallest leak may grow
To a flood in a single night ;
And he knows the strength of the cruel sea
When loosed in its angry might.

- 5 And the boy ! He has seen the danger,
 And, shouting a wild alarm,
 He forces back the weight of the sea
 With the strength of his single arm !
 He listens for the joyful sound
10 Of a footstep passing nigh ;
 And lays his ear to the ground, to catch
 The answer to his cry.
 And he hears the rough wind blowing,
 And the waters rise and fall,
15 But never an answer comes to him,
 Save the echo of his call.
 He sees no hope, no succor,
 His feeble voice is lost ;
 Yet what shall he do but watch and wait,
20 Though he perish at his post !
- So, faintly calling and crying
Till the sun is under the sea ;
Crying and moaning till the stars
Come out for company ;

He thinks of his brother and sister,
Asleep in their safe, warm bed ;
He thinks of his father and mother,
Of himself as dying — and dead ;
And of how, when the night is over, 5
They must come and find him at last :
But he never thinks he can leave the place
Where duty holds him fast.

The good dame in the cottage
Is up and astir with the light, 10
For the thought of her little Peter
Has been with her all night.
And now she watches the pathway,
As yestereve she had done ;
But what does she see so strange and black 15
Against the rising sun ?
Her neighbors are bearing between them
Something straight to her door ;
Her child is coming home, but not
As he ever came before ! 20

“He is dead !” she cries ; “my darling !”
And the startled father hears,
And comes and looks the way she looks,
And fears the thing she fears :

Till a glad shout from the bearers
Thrills the stricken man and wife—
“Give thanks, for your son has saved our land,
And God has saved his life!”

5 So, there in the morning sunshine
They knelt about the boy;
And every head was bared, and bent
In tearful, reverent joy.

’Tis many a year since then; but still,
10 When the sea roars like a flood,
Their boys are taught what a boy can do
Who is brave and true and good.
For every man in that country
Takes his son by the hand,
15 And tells him of little Peter,
Whose courage saved the land.

They have many a valiant hero,
Remembered through the years:
But never one whose name so oft
20 Is named with loving tears.
And his deed shall be sung by the cradle,
And told to the child on the knee,
So long as the dikes of Holland
Divide the land from the sea!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

AMERICA, 1807-1892

The Huskers

It was late in mild October, and the long autumnal rain

Had left the summer harvest fields all green with grass again ;

The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all the woodlands gay

With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose broad and red,

At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he sped ;

Yet, even his noontide glory fell chastened and subdued

On the corn fields and the orchards, and softly pictured wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the night,

He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow light ;

Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified the hill ;
And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter,
greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught
glimpses of that sky,
Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed,
they knew not why ;
5 And schoolgirls, gay with aster flowers, beside
the meadow brooks,
Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine
of sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient
weathercocks ;
But even the birches on the hill stood motionless
as rocks.
No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's
dropping shell,
10 And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low
rustling as they fell.


The summer grains were harvested ; the stubble
fields lay dry,
Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the
pale green waves of rye ;

But still, on gentle hill slopes, in valleys fringed
with wood,
Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn
crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through
husks that, dry and sere,
Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out
the yellow ear ;
Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a ver- 5
dant fold,
And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's
sphere of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters ; and many a
creaking wain
Bore slowly to the long barn floor its load of
husk and grain ;
Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank
down, at last,
And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in 10
brightness passed.

And lo ! as through the western pines, on meadow,
stream and pond,
Flamed the red radiance of a sky set all afire
beyond,



Slowly o'er the Eastern sea bluffs a milder glory
shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled
into one!

As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed
away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil shadows lay;
8 From many a brown old farmhouse, and hamlet
without name,
Their milking and their home tasks done, the
merry huskers came.

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitch-
forks in the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant
scene below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden
ears before,
10 And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown
cheeks glimmering o'er.

Half hidden in a quiet nook, serene of look and
heart,
Talking their old times over, the old men sat
apart;

While, up and down the unhusked pile, or nest-
ling in its shade,
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the
happy children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden
young and fair,
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of
soft brown hair,
The master of the village school, sleek of hair
and smooth of tongue,
To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husk-
ing ballad sung.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

AMERICA, 1831-1885

Down to Sleep

November woods are bare and still ;
November days are clear and bright ;
Each noon burns up the morning's chill ;
The morning's snow is gone by night ;
Each day my steps grow slow, grow light,
As through the woods I reverent creep,
Watching all things lie "down to sleep."

I never knew before what beds,
Fragrant to smell, and soft to touch,
The forest sifts and shapes and spreads ;
I never knew before how much
5 Of human sound there is in such
Low tones as through the forest sweep
When all wild things lie "down to
sleep."

Each day I find new coverlids
Tucked in, and more sweet eyes shut
tight ;
10 Sometimes the viewless mother bids
Her ferns kneel down, full in my sight ;
I hear their chorus of "good-night" ;
And half I smile, and half I weep,
Listening while they lie "down to sleep."

15 November woods are bare and still ;
November days are bright and good ;
Life's noon burns up life's morning chill ;
Life's night rests feet which long have
stood ;
Some warm, soft bed, in field or wood,
20 The mother will not fail to keep,
Where we can lay us "down to sleep."

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

ENGLAND, 1793-1835

**The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New
England**

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed ;

And the heavy night hung dark 5
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came ; 10
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame ;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear ; —
They shook the depths of the desert gloom 15
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea ;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free !

5 The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roared —
This was their welcome home !

There were men with hoary hair
10 Amidst that pilgrim band ;
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land ?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth ;
15 There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar ?
Bright jewels of the mine ?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war ? —
20 They sought a faith's pure shrine !

Ay, call it holy ground,
 The soil where first they trod.
 They have left unstained what there they
 found —
 Freedom to worship God.

ALBERT GORTON GREENE

AMERICA, 1802-1868

Old Grimes

Old Grimes is dead ; that good old man, ⁵
 We ne'er shall see him more ;
 He used to wear a long, black coat,
 All buttoned down before.

His heart was open as the day,
 His feelings all were true ; ¹⁰
 His hair was some inclined to gray,
 He wore it in a queue.

He lived at peace with all mankind,
 In friendship he was true ;
 His coat had pocket holes behind, ¹⁵
 His pantaloons were blue.

He modest merit sought to find,
And pay it its desert ;
He had no malice in his mind,
No ruffles on his shirt.

5 His neighbors he did not abuse,
Was sociable and gay ;
He wore large buckles on his shoes,
And changed them every day.

10 His knowledge, hid from public gaze,
He did not bring to view,
Nor make a noise town-meeting days,
As many people do.

15 His worldly goods he never threw
In trust to fortune's chances,
But lived (as all his brothers do)
In easy circumstances.

20 Thus undisturbed by anxious cares
His peaceful moments ran ;
And everybody said he was
A fine old gentleman.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

The Day is Done


The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village 5
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain, 10
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling 15
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,



Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest,
5 Life's endless toil and endeavor ;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humble poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
10 Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

15 Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
20 The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

THOMAS MOORE

IRELAND, 1779-1852

Those Evening Bells

Those evening bells ! those evening bells ! 5
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime !

Those joyous hours are passed away ;
And many a heart that then was gay, 10
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone —
That tuneful peal will still ring on ;
While other bards shall walk these dells ; 15
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

AMERICA, 1792-1852

Home, Sweet Home

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home ;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with
elsewhere.

5 Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home ! there's no place like
home !

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain ;
Oh, give me my lowly, thatched cottage again !
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call, —
10 Give me them, — and the peace of mind, dearer
than all !

Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home ! there's no place like
home !

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile !
15 Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home !

Home, home, sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home! there's no place like
home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care ;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there ;
No more from that cottage again will I roam ; 5
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home ! there's no place like
home !

THOMAS CARLYLE

ENGLAND, 1795-1881

To-day

Lo here hath been dawning
Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?

Out of Eternity
This new day is born ;
Into Eternity, 15
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did ;
So soon it forever
From all eyes is hid.

5 Here hath been dawning
Another blue day ;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?

JOHN KEATS

ENGLAND, 1796-1821

Morning

I stood tiptoe upon a little hill ;
10 The air was cooling and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty-leaved and finely tapering stems,
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
15 Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new-
shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook ; sweetly they
slept
On the blue fields of heaven ; and then there crept

A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves ;
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
A bush of Mayflowers with the bees about them ; 5
Ah, sure no tasteful nook could be without them.
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep
 them
Moist, cool, and green ; and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets. 10

ALFRED TENNYSON

ENGLAND, 1809-1892

Spring

[From "*In Memoriam*"]

Now fades the last long streak of snow ;
 Now bourgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long, 15
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

5 Where now the sea mew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives

10 From land to land ; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too ; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770-1850

March

15 The cock is crowing,
 The stream is flowing,
 The small birds twitter,
 The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
 The oldest and youngest
 Are at work with the strongest ;

The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one.

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated, 5
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The plowboy is whooping — anon — anon ;
There's joy in the mountains,
There's life in the fountains ; 10
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone !

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794-1878

The Planting of the Apple Tree

Come, let us plant the apple tree.
Cleave the tough greensward with the spade ; 15
Wide let its hollow bed be made ;
There gently lay the roots, and there
Sift the dark mold with kindly care,

And press it o'er them tenderly,
As, round the sleeping infant's feet,
We softly fold the cradle sheet ;
So plant we the apple tree.

- 5 What plant we in the apple tree ?
 Buds, which the breath of summer days
 Shall lengthen into leafy sprays ;
 Boughs where the thrush, with crimson breast,
 Shall haunt and sing and hide her nest ;
10 We plant upon the sunny lea,
 A shadow for the noontide hour,
 A shelter from the summer shower,
 When we plant the apple tree.

- What plant we in this apple tree ?
15 Sweets for a hundred flowery springs
 To load the May wind's restless wings,
 When, from the orchard row, he pours
 Its fragrance through the open doors ;
 A world of blossoms for the bee,
20 Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,
 For the glad infant sprigs of bloom,
 We plant the apple tree.

- What plant we in this apple tree ?
 Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,
25 And redden in the August noon,

THE PLANTING OF THE APPLE TREE 47

And drop, when gentle airs come by,
That fan the blue September sky,
While children come, with cries of glee,
And seek them where the fragrant grass
Betrays their bed to those who pass, 5
At the foot of the apple tree.

And when, above this apple tree,
The winter stars are quivering bright,
And winds go howling through the night,
Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth, 10
Shall peel its fruit by the cottage hearth,
And guests in prouder homes shall see,
Heaped with the grape of Cintra's vine
And golden orange of the line,
The fruit of the apple tree. 15

The fruitage of this apple tree
Winds and our flag of stripe and star
Shall bear to coasts that lie afar,
Where men shall wonder at the view,
And ask in what fair groves they grew; 20
And sojourners beyond the sea
Shall think of childhood's careless day,
And long, long hours of summer play,
In the shade of the apple tree.

Each year shall give this apple tree
A broader flush of roseate bloom,
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,
And loosen, when the frost clouds lower,
5 The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.
The years shall come and pass, but we
Shall hear no longer, where we lie,
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,
In the boughs of the apple tree.

10 And time shall waste this apple tree.
Oh, when its aged branches throw
Thin shadows on the ground below,
Shall fraud and force and iron will
Oppress the weak and helpless still?
15 What shall the tasks of mercy be,
Amid the toils, the strifes, the tears
Of those who live when length of years
Is wasting this little apple tree?

"Who planted this old apple tree?"
20 The children of that distant day
Thus to some aged man shall say;
And, gazing on its mossy stem,
The gray-haired man shall answer them:
"A poet of the land was he,

Born in the rude but good old times ;
"Tis said he made some quaint old rhymes,
On planting the apple tree."

CHARLES KINGSLEY

ENGLAND, 1819-1875

Song of the River

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow and dreaming pool ; 5
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle and foaming wear ;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church bell rings,
Undefined, for the undefined ; 10
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoke-grimed town in its murky cowl ;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank ; 15
Darker and darker the farther I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow ;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled ?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and
child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
5 To the golden sands and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled,
10 Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

BARRY CORNWALL (BRYAN W. PROCTER)

ENGLAND, 1787-1874

The Sea

The sea! the sea! the open sea!
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!
Without a mark, without a bound,
15 It runneth the earth's wide regions round;
It plays with the clouds; it mocks the skies;
Or like a cradled creature lies.

I'm on the sea! I'm on the sea!
I am where I would ever be,
With the blue above, and the blue below,
20 And silence wheresoe'er I go:

If a storm should come and awake the deep,
What matter? I shall ride and sleep.

I love, oh! how I love to ride
On the fierce, foaming, bursting tide,
When every mad wave drowns the moon, 5
Or whistles aloft his tempest tune,
And tells how goeth the world below,
And why the sou'west blasts do blow.

I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more, 10
And backward flew to her billowy breast,
Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest;
And a mother she was and is to me,
For I was born on the open sea!

The waves were white, and red the morn, 15
In the noisy hour when I was born;
And the whale it whistled, the porpoise rolled,
And the dolphins bared their backs of gold;
And never was heard such an outcry wild
As welcomed to life the ocean child! 20

I've lived since then, in calm and strife,
Full fifty summers a sailor's life,

With wealth to spend and a power to range,
But never have sought nor sighed for change ;
And death, whenever he comes to me,
Shall come on the wild, unbounded sea !

THOMAS CAMPBELL

IRELAND, 1777-1844

Ye Mariners of England

- 5 Ye mariners of England,
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze !
Your glorious standard launch again
10 To match another foe :
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow ;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.
- 15 The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave —
For the deck it was their field of fame
And ocean was their grave :
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,

Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow ;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow. 5

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep ;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak, 10
She quells the floods below —
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow ;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 15

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn ;
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors ! 20
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow —
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow. 25

ROBERT BROWNING

ENGLAND, 1812-1889

Boot and Saddle

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

CHORUS

“Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !”

8 Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say ;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
“God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —

CHORUS

“Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !”

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
10 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array :
Who laughs, “Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHORUS

“Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !”

Who ? My wife Gertrude ; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, “Nay !
15 I've better counselors ; what counsel they ?

CHORUS

“Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !”

ROBERT SOUTHEY

ENGLAND, 1774-1843

The Battle of Blenheim

It was a summer evening ;
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun ;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

5

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet,
In playing there, had found :
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large and smooth and round.

10

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by ;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
" Who fell in the great victory.

15

" I find them in the garden,
For there's many hereabout ;

20

And often, when I go to plow,
The plowshare turns them out ;
For many thousand men," said he,
" Were slain in that great victory."

5 " Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
" Now tell us all about the war,
10 And what they fought each other for."

" It was the English," Kaspar cried,
" Who put the French to rout ;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out ;
15 But everybody said," quoth he,
" That 'twas a famous victory."

" My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
20 And he was forced to fly ;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head."

“With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a nursing mother then,
And new-born baby, died ;
But things like that, you know, must be 5
At every famous victory.

“They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won ;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun : 10
But things like that, you know, must be,
After a famous victory.

“Great praise the Duke of Marlboro’ won,
And our good prince Eugene.”
“Why, ’twas a very wicked thing !” 15
Said little Welhelmine ;
“Nay, nay, my little girl,” quoth he ;
“It was a famous victory

“And everybody praised the Duke,
Who this great fight did win.” 20
“But what good came of it at last ?”
Quoth little Peterkin.
“Why, that I cannot tell,” said he ;
“But ’twas a famous victory.”

DINAH MARIA MULOCH CRAIK

ENGLAND, 1826-1887

Highland Cattle

Down the wintry mountain

Like a cloud they come,

Not like a cloud in its silent shroud

When the sky is leaden and the earth all
dumb,

5 But tramp, tramp, tramp,

With a roar and a shock,

And stamp, stamp, stamp,

Down the hard granite rock,

With the snowflakes falling fair

10 Like an army in the air

Of white-winged angels leaving

Their heavenly homes, half grieving,

And half glad to drop down kindly upon earth
so bare :

With a snort and a bellow

15 Tossing manes dun and yellow,

Red and roan, black and gray,

In their fierce merry play,

Though the sky is all leaden and the earth all
dumb —

Down the noisy cattle come !

Throned on the mountain

Winter sits at ease :

Hidden under mist are those peaks of amethyst
That rose like hills of heaven above the amber
seas.

While crash, crash, crash,

5

Through the frozen heather brown,

And dash, dash, dash,

Where the ptarmigan drops down

And the curlew stops her cry

And the deer sinks, like to die —

10

And the waterfall's loud noise

Is the only living voice —

With a plunge and a roar

Like mad waves upon the shore,

Or the wind through the pass

15

Howling o'er the reedy grass —

In a wild battalion pouring from the heights
unto the plain,

Down the cattle come again !

CHARLES KINGSLEY

ENGLAND, 1819-1875

The Sands of Dee

“ O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o’ Dee ” ;
The western wind was wild and dank wi’ foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o’er and o’er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
10 As far as eye could see ;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land,
And never home came she.

“ Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress o’ golden hair,
15 O’ drownéd maiden’s hair,
Above the nets at sea ?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee.”

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel, crawling foam,
The cruel, hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea ;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home, 5
Across the sands o' Dee.

CHARLES LAMB

ENGLAND, 1775-1834

The Housekeeper

The frugal snail, with forecast of repose,
Carries his house with him where'er he goes ;
Peeps out, — and, if there comes a shower of rain,
Retreats to his small domicile amain. 10
Touch but a tip of him, a horn — 'tis well, —
He curls up in his sanctuary shell.
He's his own landlord, his own tenant ; stay
Long as he will, he dreads no Quarter Day.
Himself he boards and lodges ; both invites 15
And feasts himself ; sleeps with himself o' nights.
He spares the upholsterer trouble to procure
Chattels ; himself is his own furniture,
And his sole riches. Wheresoe'er he roam,
Knock when you will, — he's sure to be at home. 20.

ALFRED TENNYSON

ENGLAND, 1809-1892

The Shell

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
5 Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

What is it? A learned man
10 Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
15 That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurled,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
20 Through his dim water-world?

Slight, to be crushed with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of the cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

5

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794-1878

To the Fringed Gentian

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

10

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground bird's hidden nest.

15

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frost and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

5 Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue — blue — as if the sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

10 I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

AMERICA, 1807-1892

The Corn Song

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!
Heap high the golden corn!
15 No richer gift has Autumn poured
From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean
The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
The cluster from the vine ;

We better love the hardy gift 5
Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
Our harvest fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers,
Our plows their furrows made, 10
While on the hills the sun and showers
Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain,
Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain 15
The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June,
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
Its soft and yellow hair. 20

And now, with Autumn's moonlit eves,
Its harvest time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
And bear the treasure home.

There, richer than the fabled gift
Apollo showered of old,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And knead its meal of gold.

5 Let vapid idlers loll in silk,
Around their costly board ;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured !

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
10 Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
And bless our farmer girls !

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
Whose folly laughs to scorn
15 The blessing of our hardy grain,
Our wealth of golden corn !

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
20 The wheat field to the fly :

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod ;
Still let us, for his golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God !

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

The Skeleton in Armor

“ Speak ! speak ! thou fearful guest !

Who, with thy hollow breast

Still in rude armor drest,

Comest to daunt me !

Wrapt not in Eastern balms,

5

But with thy fleshless palms

Stretched, as if asking alms,

Why dost thou haunt me ? ”

Then, from those cavernous eyes

Pale flashes seemed to rise,

10

As when the Northern skies

Gleam in December ;

And, like the water’s flow

Under December’s snow,

Came a dull voice of woe

15

From the heart’s chamber.

“ I was a Viking old !

My deeds, though manifold,

No Skald in song has told,

No Saga taught thee !

20

Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse! '
For this I sought thee.

5 "Far in the Northern land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast bound,
10 Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grizzly bear,
15 While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the werewolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
20 Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.

Wild was the life we led ;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
 By our stern orders.

“ Many a wassail bout 5
Wore the long Winter out ;
Often our midnight shout
 Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk’s tale
Measured in cups of ale, 10
Draining the oaken pail,
 Filled to o’erflowing.

“ Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me, 15
 Burning yet tender ;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
 Fell their soft splendor. 20

“ I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest’s shade
 Our vows were plighted.

Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

5 “ Bright in her father’s hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory ;
When of old Hildebrand
10 I asked his daughter’s hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
 To hear my story.

 “ While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
15 And as the wind gusts waft
 The sea foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
20 Blew the foam lightly.

 “ She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded !

Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea mew's flight ?
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded ?

“ Scarce had I put to sea, 5
Bearing the maid with me, —
Fairest of all was she
 Among the Norsemen ! —
When on the white sea strand,
Waving his arméd hand, 10
Saw we old Hildebrand,
 With twenty horsemen.

“ Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast, 15
 When the wind failed us ;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us. 20

“ And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
Death ! was the helmsman's hail,
 Death without quarter !

Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

5 " As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
10 Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

 " Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
15 Cloudlike we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
20 Stands looking seaward.

 " There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother;

Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies ;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another !

"Still grew my bosom then, 5
 Still as a stagnant fen!
 Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful!
 In the vast forest here,
 Clad in my warlike gear, 10
 Fell I upon my spear,
 O, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars,
 Bursting these prison bars,
 Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended !
 There from the flowing bowl
 Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal ! to the Northland ! skoal !"
 — Thus the tale ended.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

Paul Revere's Ride

- Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
- 5 Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light, —
- 10 One if by land, and two if by sea ;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."
- 15 Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swung wide at her moorings lay
The *Somerset*, British man-of-war ;
- 20 A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,

And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street
Wanders and watches, with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears 5
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North 10
Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade, — 15
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town
And the moonlight flowing over all. 20

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still

That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"

- 5 A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
10 Where the river widens to meet the bay, —
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide like a bridge of boats.

- Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
15 On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now he gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth
And turned and straightened his saddle girth;
20 But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves of the hill,
Lonely and spectral and somber and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
25 A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!

He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark, 5
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and
 the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his 10
 flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge, 15
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock, 20
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
5 And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
10 When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.
15 And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
20 How the British Regulars fired and fled, —
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again

Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm, — 5
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on the night wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last, 10
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

WILLIAM COWPER

ENGLAND, 1731-1800

Verses

*[Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary
abode in the island of Juan Fernandez]*

I am monarch of all I survey, 15
My right there is none to dispute;
From the center all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

O Solitude ! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

- 5 I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
10 My form with indifference see ;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.
- Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
15 O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again !
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
20 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.
- Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial, endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.

My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me ?
O, tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind ! 5
 Compar'd with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest himself lags behind
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.
 When I think of my own native land,
 In a moment I seem to be there ; 10
 But, alas ! recollection at hand
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair ;
Even here is a season of rest, 15
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought,
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot. 20

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

A Psalm of Life

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream ! —
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

5 Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal ;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

10 Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

15 Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
20 Be a hero in the strife !

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us 5
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main, 10
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

THOMAS HOOD

ENGLAND, 1798-1845

Ruth

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won. 20

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened ; such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

5 Round her eyes her tresses fell ;
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
10 Made her tressy forehead dim.
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, Heaven did not mean
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean ;
15 Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

PHILLIPS BROOKS

AMERICA, 1835-1893

O Little Town of Bethlehem !

O little town of Bethlehem !

How still we see thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
20 The silent stars go by ;

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM! 85

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light ;
The hopes and fears of all the years,
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary, 5
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth ! 10
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given ;
So God imparts to human hearts 15
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in. 20

O holy Child of Bethlehem !
Descend to us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.

We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell,
O, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel !

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

AMERICA, 1827-

Farmer John

- 5 Home from his journey, Farmer John
Arrived this morning safe and sound ;
His black coat off, and his old clothes on,
“Now I’m myself,” said Farmer John ;
And he thinks, “I’ll look around.”
- 10 Up leaps the dog : “Get down, you pup !
Are you so glad you would eat me up ?”
The old cow lows at the gate to greet him ;
The horses prick up their ears to meet him.
“Well, well, old Bay !
15 Ha, ha, old Gray !
Do you get good feed when I’m away ?”
“You haven’t a rib,” says Farmer John ;
“The cattle are looking round and sleek ;
The colt is going to be a roan,
20 And a beauty, too ; how he has grown !

We'll wean the calf in a week."
Says Farmer John, "When I've been off,
To call you again about the trough,
And water you and pet you while you drink,
Is a greater comfort than you can think!" 5

And he pats old Bay,
And he slaps old Gray;
"Ah! this is the comfort of going away."

"For after all," says Farmer John,
"The best of a journey is getting home: 10
I've seen great sights, but I would not give
This spot, and the peaceful life I live,

For all their Paris and Rome;
These hills for the city's stifled air,
And big hotels and bustle and glare;— 15
Land all houses and roads all stones,
That deafen your ears and batter your bones!

Would you, old Bay?
Would you, old Gray?
That's what one gets by going away." 20

"I've found out this," says Farmer John,
"That happiness is not bought and sold,
And clutched in a life of waste and hurry,
In nights of pleasure and days of worry,
And wealth isn't all in gold, 25

Mortgage and stocks, and ten per cent,
But in simple ways and sweet content,
Few wants, pure hopes, and noble ends,
Some land to till, and a few good friends.

5 Like you, old Bay,
 And you, old Gray, —
That's what I've learned by going away."

And a happy man is Farmer John, —

Oh, a rich and happy man is he!

10 He sees the peas and pumpkins growing,
The corn in tassel, the buckwheat blowing,
And fruit on vine and tree;
The large kind oxen look their thanks,
As he rubs their foreheads and strokes their flanks;
15 The doves light round him, and strut and coo;
Says Farmer John, "I'll take you, too, —
And you, old Bay,
And you, old Gray,
Next time I travel so far away."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

Excelsior

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior !

5

His brow was sad ; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior !

10

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright ;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior !

15

“ Try not the Pass ! ” the old man said ;
“ Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide ! ”
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior !

20

“O stay,” the maiden said, “and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast !”
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered with a sigh,

5

Excelsior !

“Beware the pine tree’s withered branch !
Beware the awful avalanche !”
This was the peasant’s last Good-night,
A voice replied, far up the height,

10

Excelsior !

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,

15

Excelsior !

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
Half buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice,
That banner with the strange device,

20

Excelsior !

There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,

25

Excelsior !

CHARLES MACKAY

SCOTLAND, 1814-1889

Song of Life

A traveler on a dusty road
 Strewed acorns on the lea ;
And one took root and sprouted up,
 And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time, 5
 To breathe its early vows ;
And Age was pleased, in heights of noon,
 To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs, .
 The bird sweet music bore — 10
It stood a glory in its place,
 A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
 Amid the grass and fern ;
A passing stranger scooped a well 15
 Where weary men might turn.
He walled it in, and hung with care
 A ladle on the brink ;
He thought not of the deed he did,
 But judged that Toil might drink. 20

He passed again; and lo! the well,
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parchèd tongues,
And saved a life beside.

5 A nameless man, amid the crowd
 That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
 Unstudied from the heart,
A whisper on the tumult thrown,
10 A transitory breath,
It raised a brother from the dust,
 It saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love!
 O thought at random cast!
15 Ye were but little at the first,
 But mighty at the last.



